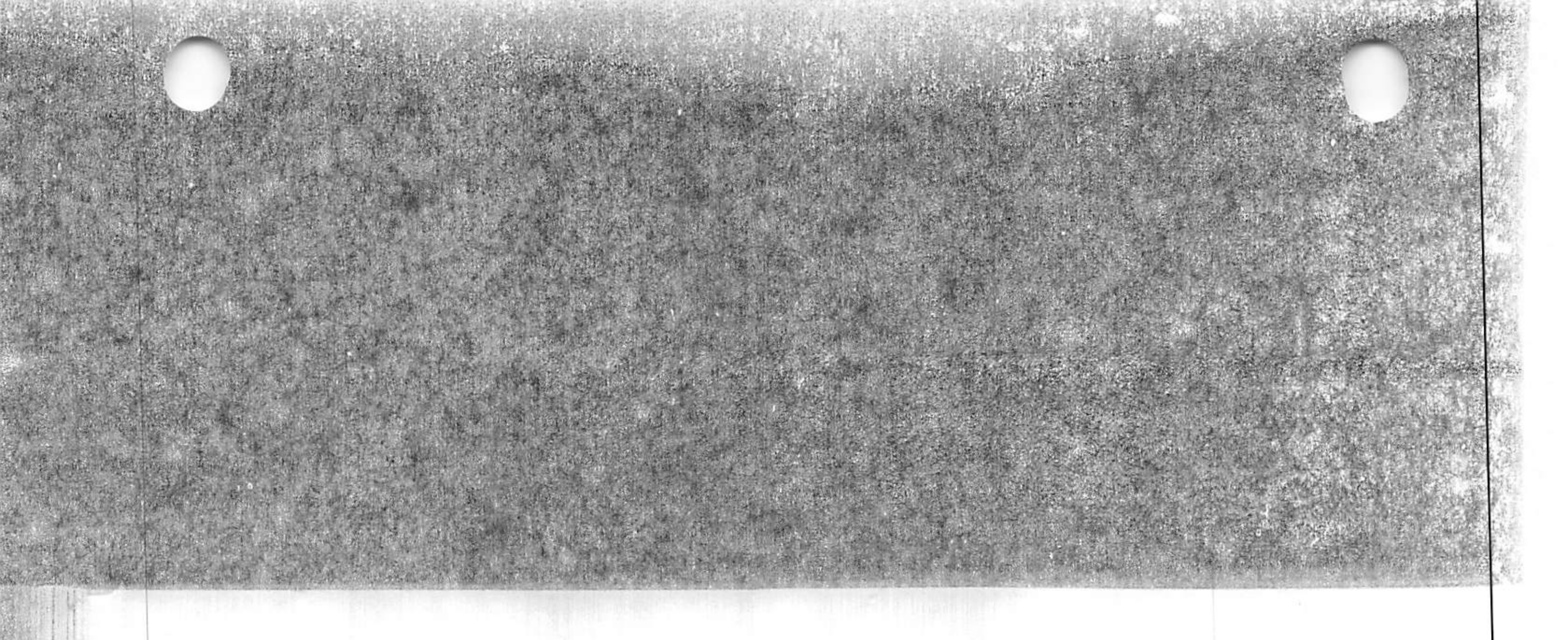


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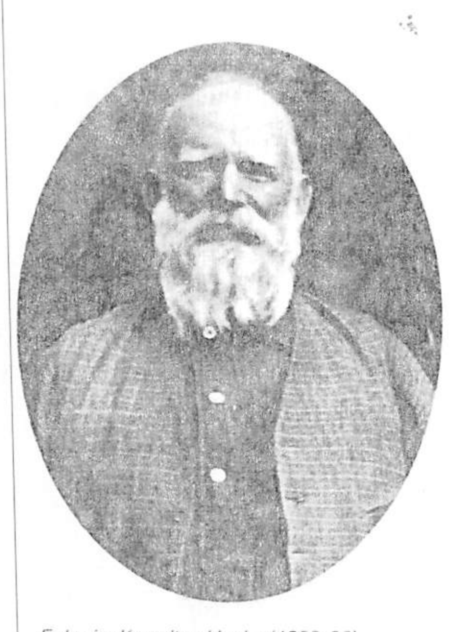
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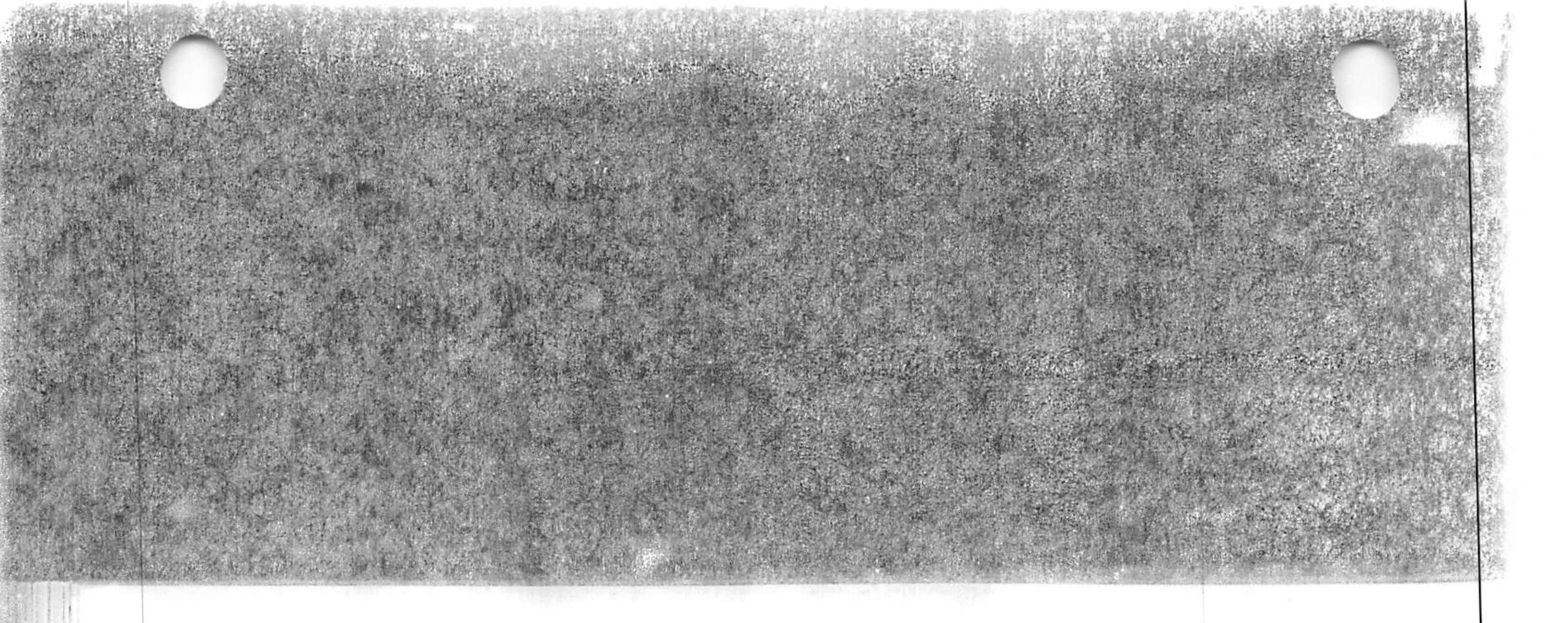
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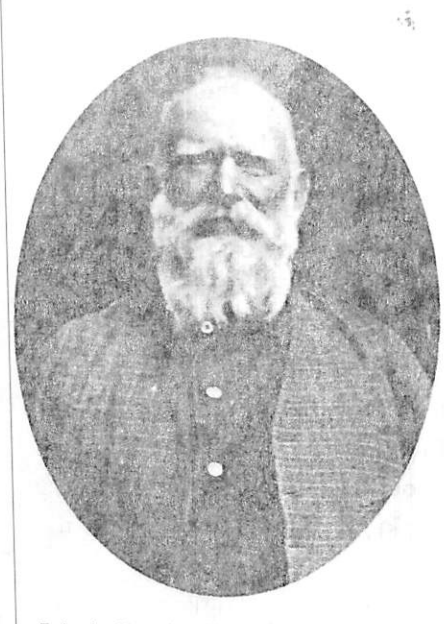
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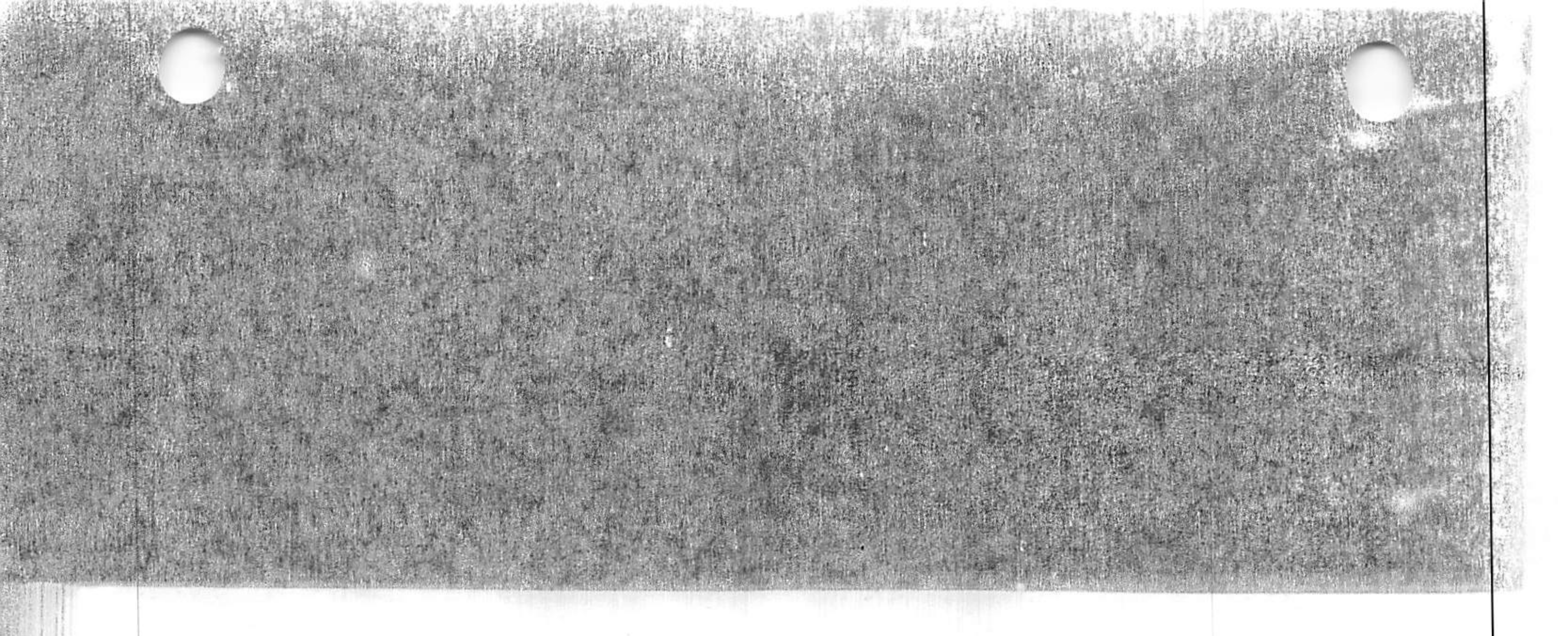
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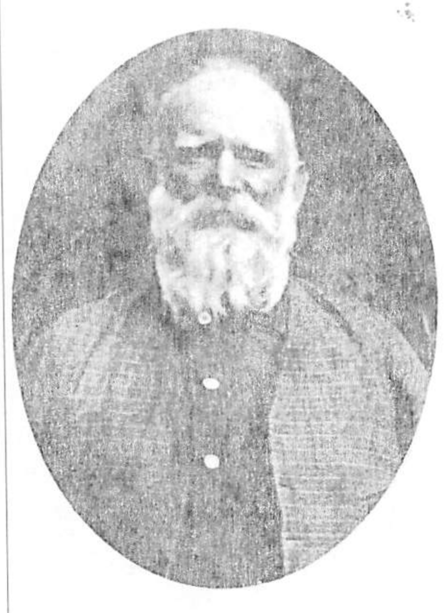
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Handcart companies

Leader	*Crossed Plains*
1. Edmund L. Ellsworth	1856
2. Daniel D. McArthur	1856
3. Edward Bunker	1856
4. James G. Willie	1856
5. Edward Martin	1856
6. Israel Evans	1857
7. Christian Christiansen	1857
8. George Rowley	1859
9. Daniel Robinson	1860
10. Oscar O. Stoddard	1860

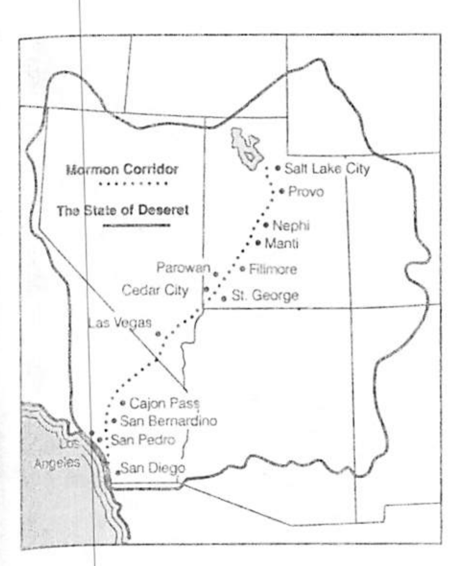
trains, who had rested at Fort Bridger, reached the valley.

Over two hundred members of the two ill-fated handcart companies were buried in frozen graves before they could reach Zion. More people died in these two companies than in any other immigrant group in the United States. The fault was not in the method of travel, but was the result of a combination of many unusual and largely unforseen circumstances. In subsequent years the Church sponsored five more handcart companies, and each of them arrived in the valley without undue hardship.

Colonization Expands

When immigrants arrived in Salt Lake City, they were usually met as they emerged from Emigration Canyon and escorted to a city block named Emigration Square. Brigham Young or some other Church leader welcomed them, and wards in the city treated them to a well-deserved celebration feast. After a few days of being cared for by the local Saints, these new arrivals were sent to other communities or were given land and work in the Salt Lake City area. Especially in the early years, the immigrants were usually assigned a location, often based on a correlation between their skills and the needs of the various communities. Between 1847 and 1857, over one hundred towns were founded and colonized.

Following the work of Parley P. Pratt's Southern Exploring Company in 1849–50, Church leaders began establishing communities along the "Mormon Corridor" on the line of mountains leading southwestwardly toward southern California. The first of these were Parowan, an agriculture center, and Cedar City, the headquarters of the "iron mission," both founded in 1851. By 1853 nearly all the sites recommended by the Southern Exploring Company had been settled.



The route through southern Utah across Nevada and into southern California was known as the Mormon Corridor. A string of settlements or forts along this route provided shelter and protection for the traveler all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

San Bernardino, in southern California, was also founded in 1851. It was designed to serve as a base of supplies and a receiving station near a Pacific port. Elders Amasa Lyman and Charles C. Rich of the Quorum of the Twelve presided over the colony, which grew to some seven thousand people by 1857. Plans to bring the European Saints around South America's Cape Horn and through San Bernardino up the Mormon Corridor to Salt Lake City never materialized because ships could not be chartered. Some of the Saints from Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific islands, however, did come via San Bernardino. Brigham Young eventually came to doubt the wisdom of having such a large center in California. In 1857 members of the colony were called home, partly because federal troops were approaching Utah and partly because the colony was experiencing internal dissension and problems with non-Mormon neighbors. Some residents of San Bernardino did not respond to the prophet's direction and remained in California.

The expansion of the settlements was also influenced by missionary work among the Indians. Soon after the founding of Cedar City, groups were